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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2012
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PARM](#) [TZ](#)
SUBJECT: TANZANIA: START OF ACOTA TRAINING DELAYED UNTIL
AUGUST

REF: US DAO REPORTING IIR 6 959 0091 07

Classified By: Chief of Mission, Michael L. Retzer,
for reason 1.4(b and d).

11. (S) SUMMARY. As suspected, the Kikwete administration is facing civilian-military tensions: Tanzania's Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) is hindering the President and Minister of Defence's decision to take the next step in the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program. Fortunately, the CDF is due to retire July 31 and President Kikwete intends to put the program on track after his departure. On May 2, Defence Minister Juma Kapuya asked to meet with Ambassador Retzer to apologize for the delay and to assure the Ambassador that ACOTA training could begin sometime after August 1. Kapuya confided to the Ambassador that President Kikwete was "trying to avoid open confrontation and buying time." (Note: the Minister implied that this confrontation was with the CDF and that he was waiting until the CDF retired in July.) Repeatedly confirming President Kikwete's commitment to U.S. peacekeeping training, Kapuya also sought the Ambassador's help in explaining the matter to Washington. "We don't want anything to taint the positive momentum that is building in our relationship," Kapuya stressed. The Ambassador assured the Minister that we understood the temporary obstacle President Kikwete faced and that we looked forward to starting ACOTA training in August. END SUMMARY.

Background: ACOTA and General Waitara

12. (S) Soon after his inauguration in December 2005, President Kikwete expressed his desire to play a more active role in peacekeeping operations and requested U.S. training assistance. In 2006, Tanzania became the U.S.' newest partner under ACOTA and in December 2006, ACOTA hosted a week long conference with senior officials from Tanzania's Peoples Defence Forces (TPDF) in Dar es Salaam to develop a joint timeline and strategy for peacekeeping training.

13. (S) With a goal of training three peacekeeping battalions by the end of FY 2008, the first round of ACOTA training was initially scheduled to begin in March 2007. However, in March the TPDF pushed back the start date until

April 23. In mid-April, the TPDF delayed the start of ACOTA training once again. Following up on the status of the start date, post's Defense Attach learned that the TPDF would not move forward without an official go-ahead from the Chief of Defence Forces (General Waitara). Waitara was maintaining that a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the U.S. and Tanzania needed to be in place before ACOTA training could begin. Although we are currently in the initial stage of trying to negotiate a SOFA with the Tanzanian government, post has repeatedly made clear to the TPDF and Ministry of Defence that a SOFA was not required to start ACOTA training.

(Note: It is important to understand that General Waitara embodies Tanzania's old socialist guard and has a long record of resisting closer ties with the USG in favor of China and other socialist countries.)

¶4. (S) In response to postponement of the ACOTA training for a second time, Ambassador Retzer telephoned Defence Minister Kapuya on April 11 in Dodoma to explain that ACOTA training had been delayed and that ACOTA could start without a SOFA in place. The Ambassador also raised the issue in his April 20 meeting with Foreign Minister Bernard Membe (reftel), noting that the CDF, General Waitara, was delaying ACOTA peacekeeping training, a program the GOT itself had requested and committed to. Through contacts at State House, Post learned that the Minister of Defence met with both the Foreign Minister and President Kikwete to discuss the issue.

Avoiding Confrontation

¶5. (S) On May 2, Minister Kapuya told the Ambassador, "After you telephoned me about the TPDF delaying the ACOTA training, I wrote a letter to our Chief of Defence Forces (General Waitara)." Kapuya handed the Ambassador a copy of the letter

which stated President Kikwete's commitment to peacekeeping training and urged Waitara to promptly provide a date and a list of names so that ACOTA training could begin. Minister Kapuya said that TPDF never provided a formal response and as a result, he consulted with both Foreign Minister Membe and President Kikwete on the way forward. "President Kikwete then asked me to discuss the issue with you in person, as the matter is too sensitive to discuss over the phone," Kapuya said.

Buying Time Until CDF Retires

¶6. (S) Minister Kapuya explained that President Kikwete had already made his position clear: During the March visit of General William Ward, Deputy Commander of U.S. European Command, Kikwete stressed his commitment to peacekeeping training in front of his Chief of Defence Forces. Now there is a dilemma with the delay, Kapuya explained. "We are trying to avoid open confrontation (with the CDF). We are trying to buy time - two to three months - so that we avoid a confrontation which could negatively affect the country."

ACOTA Training to Begin in August 2007

¶7. (S) Although never mentioning General Waitara by name, Minister Kapuya repeated, "We are trying to explain the situation in a manner you can understand because it is difficult for us." He repeatedly apologized for the delay and requested the Ambassador's assistance in explaining the situation to Washington. "We are committed to peacekeeping training under ACOTA and we don't want the delay to taint the positive momentum in our relationship," Kapuya said.

¶8. (S) Ambassador Retzer assured Minister Kapuya that we understood the GOT's commitment as well as the obstacle which the President and Minister of Defence were facing. Ambassador Retzer noted the confusion (started by General Waitara) about a link between ACOTA and a SOFA and clarified that a SOFA was not needed to start ACOTA training. Minister Kapuya nodded and said, "We understand this. Everyone understands this - that we don't need a SOFA to proceed with ACOTA. It is safe to say we can begin ACOTA peacekeeping training in August 2007."

USG Military Training Programs: FY 2007 and FY 2008

¶9. (S) Ambassador Retzer presented to Minister Kapuya the variety of International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs offered through the Defense Attach Office (DAO) in FY 2007 and FY 2008, noting the significant increase in training opportunities during FY 2008, due to the recent waiver on IMET restrictions. DAO LTC Varhola noted that it was important to identify potential candidates for the available spaces at U.S. military academies and highlighted the availability of refresher English classes for TPDF officers prior to IMET courses.

¶10. (S) Minister Kapuya responded by saying, "There are all these opportunities unfolding before us. We are all in favor but let us wait." He added, "You've done very well by engaging the Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Davies A. Mwamunyange, and you should continue to do so." Ambassador Retzer emphasized again that we understood the President's position and would wait for the GOT's signal to begin ACOTA training in August.

Comment: An Easy Calculation

¶11. (S) The Kikwete administration finds itself in a difficult position: President Kikwete publicly committed to peacekeeping training but is being blatantly hamstrung by his own Chief of Defence Forces. Yet President Kikwete has made an easy calculation, which we, in fact, agree with. The cost of waiting 12 weeks until General Waitara retires appears a small price to pay compared to open confrontation with Tanzania's most senior military officer whose attitude is, "ACOTA over my dead body." END COMMENT.
RETZER